

Message Text

SECRET

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53

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

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R 220748Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9009

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY ROME

S E C R E T LISBON 268

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, PO, CU, VT

SUBJECT: LUNT-PERALTA EXCHANGE

REF: ROME 770

1. EMBOFFS DISCUSSED SUBJECT CASE WITH LUNT ATTORNEY
WAINWRIGHT JANUARY 18. WAINWRIGHT EXPLAINED HIS EFFORTS
ON BEHALF LUNT'S FAMILY, AND INVOLVEMENT OF BELGIANS
AND VATICAN. EMBOFFS AND ATTORNEY AGREED THAT FOR
PORTUGAL TO ACCEPT IDEA OF EXCHANGE, THERE MUST BE
SOME CLEAR ADVANTAGE FOR PORTUGAL IN THE ARRANGEMENT.
WE ALSO AGREED THAT GIVEN THE NATURE OF PORTUGUESE-
CUBAN RELATIONS, ADVANTAGE TO PORTUGAL COULD ALMOST
ONLY COME FROM AN IMPROVED PUBLIC IMAGE.

2. SAME DAY DCM CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTRY DIRECTOR
GENERAL OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS FREITAS CRUZ. DCM
REVIEWED WITH FREITAS CRUZ DISCUSSION HE HAD ON
SUBJECT WITH FOREIGN MINISTER DECEMBER 31, NOTING
THAT FOREIGN MINISTER HIMSELF SAW NO PROSPECT THE
CUBANS WOULD ADMIT THEY HAD SENT PERALTA AND OTHERS
TO FIGHT WITH PAIGC OR THAT THEY WOULD PROMISE SEND
NO MORE "PERALTAS". INDEED, EVEN IF SUCH A PROMISE
WERE OFRTHCOMING FROM THE CUBANS, THEY COULD EASILY
BREAK IT. CONSEQUENTLY THERE SEEMED TO BE NO TANGIBLE
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ADVANTAGE TO BE GAINED BY PORTUGAL IN EITHER KEEPING

OR RELEASING PERALTA. HOWEVER IT WOULD BE DISTINCTLY TO PORTUGAL'S ADVANTAGE TO IMPROVE ITS PUBLIC IMAGE IN THE UNITED STATES, AND THIS COULD WELL OCCUR IF IT WERE TO BECOME KNOWN THAT PORTUGAL HAD BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN SECURING LUNT'S RELEASE. THERE IS CONSIDERABLE HIGH-LEVEL INTEREST IN THE LUNT CASE, INCLUDING CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST, AND BY MAKING THIS HUMANITARIAC GESTURE PORTUGAL MIGHT WELL WIN FOR ITSELF SOME INFLUENTIAL FRIENDS WITHIN THE UNITED STATES. FREILAS CRUZ ACKNOWLEDGED THE VALIDITY OF THE ARGUMENT AND AGREED TO PASS IT "UPSTAIRS", NOTING THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HIMSELF HAD SHOWN INTEREST IN THE PERALTA CASE.

3. MEANWHILE, WAINWRIGHT HAS BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE BELGIUM AMBASSADOR AND IS PRESENTING HIM WITH A MEMORANDUM SUBSTANTIALLY OUTLINING THE PRESENTATION MADE TO FREITAS CRUZ. BELGIUM AMBASSADOR PLANS TO RAISE SUBJECT WITH PORTUGUESE OFFICIALS, INCLUDING ESPECIALLY FORMER GOVERNOR AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF IN PORTUGUESE GUINEA AND WHO NOW VICE-CHIEF OF STAFF OF ARMED FORCES, GENERAL ANTONIO SPINOLA.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 JAN 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LISBON00268
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: RR
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740123/aaaaavhz.tel
Line Count: 83
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 74 ROME 770
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 APR 2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <29 MAY 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LUNT-PERALTA EXCHANGE
TAGS: CASC, PO, CU, VT
To: SECSTATE WASHDC BRUSSELS ROME
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005